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1. In a storage area network (SAN) of the type having a plurality of components including one or more digital data processors in communication with one or more storage devices via a switching fabric, the improvement comprising:

a manager executing on one of the digital data processors and in communication with the other SAN components,

one or more application processes residing on one or more components of the SAN for at least one of configuring and managing the components,

an interface process in communication with the manager and the other SAN components, the interface process effecting execution of at least one process residing on the manager data processor and at least one application process residing on another SAN component.

2. In the SAN of claim 1, the further improvement comprising

a graphical output device coupled to the interface process for displaying one or more graphical objects each representing one of the SAN components,

the interface process being coupled to the graphical output device for effecting the display of the graphical objects on the graphical output device.

3. In the SAN of claim 2, the further improvement wherein the interface process responds to selection of one of the graphical objects by effecting the display of one or more objects representing one or more application processes residing on a SAN component represented by the selected graphical object.

4. In the SAN of claim 3, the further improvement wherein the interface process responds to selection of one of the objects representing an application process by effecting execution of the application process represented by that object.
5. In the SAN of claim 4, the further improvement wherein the manager maintains a store containing information regarding one or more components of the SAN and one or more application processes residing on selected ones of the SAN components.

A1 6. (Amended) In the SAN of claim 5, the further improvement wherein the interface process accesses the store, upon selection of a graphical object representing a SAN component, to identify at least one application process, if any, residing on that component.

7. In the SAN of claim 1, wherein the application process is any of an executable application, a web-based browser application, a telnet session, or an SNMP application.
8. In the SAN of claim 5, the further improvement wherein the information regarding a component includes an identifier for that component and an application process, if any, residing on that component.
9. In the SAN of claim 8, the further improvement wherein at least one of the graphical objects representing a SAN component provides a textual description of that component.
10. In the SAN of claim 1, the further improvement wherein selected ones of the SAN components form a switching fabric for providing communication between selected ones of the digital data processors and the storage devices.

A2 11. (Amended) In the SAN of claim 10, the further improvement wherein the switching fabric components can be any of a switch, a hub, a gateway, and a storage subsystems.

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12. (Amended) In the SAN of claim 11, the further improvement wherein each of the switching fabric components includes an application process associated therewith for managing that switching fabric.
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13. In a storage area network (SAN) of the type having a plurality of components including one or more digital data processors in communication with one or more storage devices, the improvement comprising:

a manager executing on one of the digital data processors and in communication with the other SAN components,

one or more agents each associated with selected ones of the digital data processors and in communication with the manager, each agent providing the manager with information regarding the SAN components in communication with its respective digital processor,

one or more application processes associated with one or more components of the SAN for at least one of configuring and managing the components,

a store coupled to the manager for maintaining the information regarding the SAN components and one or more application processes residing on each component,

an interface process in communication with the manager and the other SAN components and having access to the store, the interface process affecting execution of at least one application process associated with the manager and at least one application process associated with another SAN component.

14. In the SAN of claim 13, the further improvement comprising a graphical output device coupled to the interface process for displaying one or more graphical objects each representing one of the SAN components.

15. In the SAN of claim 14, the further improvement wherein the interface process responds to selection of one of the graphical objects by accessing the store to retrieve information regarding one or more application processes associated with a SAN component represented by the selected graphical object, and by effecting the display of one or more objects on the graphical output device each representing one of the application processes associated with the selected SAN component.
16. In the SAN of claim 15, the further improvement wherein selected ones of the SAN components form a switching fabric for providing communication between the digital data processors and the storage devices.
17. In the SAN of claim 16, the further improvement wherein the switching fabric components can be any of a switch, a hub, a gateway, and a storage subsystem.
18. In the SAN of claim 17, the further improvement wherein each of the switching fabric components includes a management application process associated therewith for managing that switching fabric component.
19. In the SAN of claim 18, the further improvement wherein the interface process effects the execution of the management application process associated with a switching fabric component in response to selection of a graphical object representing that switching fabric component on the graphical output device.
20. In the SAN of claim 19, the further improvement wherein the interface process permits an operator to utilize the graphical output display to interact with the management application process being executed to at least one of configure and manage the switching fabric component associated with that management application process.